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Notes of the Month.

The great activity which is now taking place in the country and in the garden plots near the towns is an augury of the greatest good to the community in general. The food problem will lose much of its menace in proportion as the soil is more systematically and scientifically cultivated. There is every indication that people in the North of Ireland, as well as in other districts, are becoming more and more alive to the claims and call of the land. In a real sense men do not enter into possession of their country until they have actually worked some portion of it, and wrought it to their will. Thus, there is great significance in the following suggestive legend, which appears in a Finnish writing, but which has its analogues in other literatures :—" There was once a giantess who had a daughter, and the child saw a husbandman ploughing in the field. Then she ran and picked him up with her finger and thumb, and put him and his plough and his oxen into her apron, and carried them to her mother, and said : "Mother, what sort of beetle is this that I found wriggling in the ground ? " But the mother said, " Put it away, my child, we must be gone out of this land, for these people will dwell in it." Many a modern giant will take its departure along with Giant Despair when we have become true inhabitants of our country, and have learned to utilise to the uttermost its potential resources. As tending to that end, we heartily commend the activities of the Garden Plots Associations which are enlisting the support and services of an increasing number of our own members near the cities.

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In an appeal to our fellow-countrywomen, *The Spectator* says :—There is a special duty imposed upon the rich women of our country, old and young. They could find, no doubt, plenty of plausible excuses for the maintenance of luxurious habits. They have got the clothes, they have got the jewellery, they have long possessed the whole plant of personal extravagance. They can therefore be luxurious without new expenditure, and without asking any one to abandon a duty. They must not entertain such a plea for a moment. They must take the lead in self-sacrifice. They must make it " out of the fashion " to be luxurious in war time. How can they persuade girls in munition works, shops, and offices not to waste money on mere finery, while their own furs and pearl necklaces belie their words ?

But what are the women who have got superfluous money to do with it? The answer is an easy one. They must lend it to the State. Then they will be doing the very opposite to what they would have been doing if they had spent that money in luxuries. Their efforts will be twice blessed. Not only will they refuse to bribe others to abandon or not to take up war work, but they will be directly helping the Government, and so the nation, in its supreme hour of need. They will, by a personal act, be providing the munitions, the equipment, and the ships without which we cannot beat our enemies. To waste money is to help the Germans. To save it and lend it to the State is to deal them the knock-out blow. War-saving may *seem* a dull and prosaic way of serving the State, but it is not so.

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Once more, if those to whom we appeal will only trace to the end the consequences of putting their money into War Loans they will see that in the last resort they are firing the rifle or the machine-gun, or placing the shell in the breach, which will destroy the Prussian tyranny. They will in very deed be striking the blow they have longed so passionately to strike, when they have read the tale of German shame and horror by sea and land. Women when in earnest rightly dislike sentiment, and we have no desire to make any sentimental appeal to them. Our last word then shall be to ask them once more to think the whole matter out. If they will do so fairly and squarely, and will remember that a man's or a woman's own heart and conscience is the best adviser, we are sure that they can only come to the conclusions we have here put before them. *Expenditure upon luxuries is a crime. War-saving is one of the best forms of service to the State.*

* *

A young officer at the Front, writing to *The Spectator* on the need for sacrifice at home and the need for thrift, says :— "This need will be felt after the war, and the men and women who have squandered large wages will regret their folly: these very people have now in their hands the means of producing more 'social reform' than a dozen Acts of Parliament can procure them. They could have good houses, good boots, and good food, and set aside a sum for their old age, at the same time lending it to their country. Yet too many are simply throwing away their money on cheap jewellery, pianos that they cannot play, and drink. Social reform must come from below, and no Act of Parliament can succeed unless the people set themselves to improve their own homes. What is our education doing? If it is not teaching this it is useless. One thing stands out as certain amid all the pessimism of people who are too concerned with the smaller material issues of life. If we as a people preserve the will to win, and exercise the energy and endurance which the soldiers in France are proving to be the great inheritance of the British race, we can and we shall win the war. If we can get back at least some of the high enthusiasm and idealism of 1914, we shall also win the peace which will follow it. But if we sacrifice the blood and treasure of this Empire for a mere return to the *status quo ante*, then England, though great to all outward appearance and victorious in battle, will never again be a great nation among the nations of the world. We must take into our hearts the high aspirations and noble ideals of those who have fought in the line and of those who have died. They did not fight for wealth or for comfort, but for truth and for justice, for the defence of the weak against the oppression of the strong, and for the destruction of the old ideas which have brought forth war. War may not be destroyed for ever by this war, but it will have received a staggering blow. The subsequent peace in course of time may banish it for ever from the earth."

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We would again remind the subscribers to the Orphan Society, and those who are responsible for the collection of such subscriptions, that the latter should be in the hands of the honorary treasurer, Mr. A. Kennedy

Stewart, Donegall Place, Belfast, before the end of the present month. The lists of subscribers are to be sent to the Secretary, the Rev. Alfred Turner, Templepatrick.

A Thought for the Month

"THE PRIESTLY FUNCTION IN RELIGION."

"Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."—I. Peter ii. 5.

"The true priest of the Highest is he who brings it nearer to those whose minds seldom reach above the finite and the low; who sets heavenly and eternal things before them as a source of enjoyment and a bond of union—as the only exhaustless spring of that to which all their efforts are directed. Thus he strives to waken the sleeping germ of a better humanity, to enkindle the love for the lofty, to transform the meaner into a nobler life, to reconcile the children of earth to the heaven which is theirs, and to hold the balance against the stupid devotion of the age to mere material good. This is that higher priesthood which reveals the depths of all spiritual mysteries, and whose voice comes down from the kingdom of God; this is the source of all visions and prophesyings, of all holy works and inspired words which are scattered about, as if at random, that the apt spirit may receive them, and may bring forth fruit.

"Oh that the day might come when this function of mediator might cease, and the priesthood of humanity receive a fairer distinction! That the day might come, described by ancient prophecy, 'when none shall need that any should teach him, for all shall be taught of God!' If the sacred fire were everywhere burning, there would be no need of fervent prayer to draw it down from heaven, but only of the calm watching of holy virgins to tend it; nor would it then break out into those flames which now often strike terror, but the hidden fire would glow with equal warmth in all hearts. Every man would then silently enlighten himself and others, and the communication of holy thoughts and feelings would consist only in the easy task of combining or dividing the different rays of this light; now diffusing it, then again concentrating it on one object. Then would the slightest word be understood, whereas now the clearest expressions do not escape misunderstanding. Then would men press together into the penetralia of the sanctuary, whereas now they are occupied with the preparations of the outer court."—SCHLEIERMACHER.

WHEN YE PRAY, SAY ——?

BY NON-SUBSCRIBER.

"O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God: have mercy upon us, miserable sinners."

Thus prayed the Lord Bishop of London and a long procession of surpliced clergy, as they entered Hyde Park one day last summer, followed by large numbers of people, all chanting the Litany. Thus they addressed the Deity, and thus they described themselves.

Before the writer is a copy of the Compendium Theologicum, a Manual for the use of candidates for Holy Orders, and in the notes on the First Article of Religion it is stated that the word TRINITY was first used in Greek by Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 181; in Latin, by Tertullian, A.D. 200, and adopted by the Council of Alexandria A.D. 317.

But, having made this assertion, we find that the author adds later on—"The Christian doctrine of 'Trinity in Unity' of the Godhead from the earliest times was always held to be the chief test of *orthodoxy*.' But surely those earlier times couldn't be earlier than the dates above given.

How absolutely useless attempted subscription to any form of words is has

ample illustration in this volume in the fierce controversies, often ending in imprisonment, banishment, or excommunication of one or other of the controversialists. For instance, Sabellius (A.D. 250-260), adopting the terminology of the Church, acknowledged the Son and Holy Ghost as different phases or developments of the one original divine Monad, or God the Father, appearing under different personifications on different occasions. As only a few fragments of his writings cited by opponents remain, the exact nature of his teaching can scarcely be understood. But evidently it was an honest defence of the doctrine of the Trinity; but it raised an outcry, and Dionysius the Great, 13th Patriarch of Alexandria, at a Council held there in 261, condemned the Sabellian views; but he himself overshot the mark, and was condemned in a Roman Synod under Dionysius, 24th Bishop of Rome. This was all preparing the way for the later Arian controversy. Later on, in 565 the pioneer of the Scholastic Philosophy got himself into trouble for considering the natures of the Three Persons in the Trinity as distinct, and was charged with Tritheism, whilst his opponent, the Patriarch of Alexandria, fell into Sabellianism. To keep strictly orthodox was like having to walk along a perpetual tight-rope: very little inclination either to one side or the other meant a fall into the abyss of heresy. And so it has gone on, and still continues; and, though cases of heresy are not so frequent before Church courts as once they were, yet the shadow of the old tyranny remains wherever subscription to creeds and articles of faith is demanded, either from minister or people.

As stated in this authorised text book, the doctrine of the Trinity is the chief test of orthodoxy. History has proven the absolute impossibility of anything like agreement on the meaning of the terms once they have been adopted, and the very controversy in the General Assembly, as pointed out by Dr. Montgomery, which gave rise to the Remonstrant Synod, showed that the members of the Assembly themselves were all at variance. The Evangelical Free Church Council of England produced a Catechism which was intended to be taught in the Sunday Schools of orthodox denominations, and which was to form a common basis of belief; but the whole scheme ended in a fiasco. It produced a tremendous amount of irritation, and a great many congregations refused to look at it. "The language is as many-sided as Scripture itself," declared Hugh Price Hughes, the eminent Methodist, who dominated the Free Church Council in his day, and secured the exclusion of Unitarians.

Thinking men of all denominations declared that a mere verbal agreement was no agreement at all.

The verdict of history from the early dates given us reveals the ineptitude of subscription to forms of words to supply any real and lasting bond among Christian people. These ancient formulæ in their own way are interesting and instructive, and no doubt they were the outcome of great minds that saw deeply into the great mysteries of existence. They appeared landmarks in the history of Christian belief. But when the right of private interpretation is refused, when we are informed that before all things it is necessary to salvation to worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, then we are asked to submit to a tyranny which has proven itself to be of the cruellest and worst kind. There is a superstition, based on what Bishop Westcott, the great New Testament scholar, declared was the distorted rendering of an important text, viz.—"The faith once delivered to the saints," the real force of the original being quite the opposite of the common acceptation: "the faith into which the saints were brought": the faith into which the saints themselves were delivered. The truth was not a small thing, capable of being delivered in its entirety to a body of people—a small exclusive thing, but something great and wide and comprehensive into which the saints were brought. The poison with which from early times the Church was inoculated was the idea that Chris-

tianity was narrow and exclusive, whereas the teaching of Christ was broad and inclusive. It is very significant in the Collect, before the Proper Preface, in the Communion Service of the Church, in which God is addressed as " Holy Father " ; a note is attached : " These words (Holy Father) must be omitted on Trinity Sunday." The invocation of God as a Trinity in Unity has obscured the simple form of address, sanctioned by Christ Himself : " When ye pray, say Our Father." It is not a tyrant schoolmaster with a rod in his hand forcing his scholars to learn and repeat a contradictory dogma, but a tender and loving Father revealed in a Divine Teacher, who showed what the attitude of the Father to His children was when He Himself said : " Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

* *

HOW ITALY BECAME A NATION.

Rev. E. H. Pickering, Belfast, delivered a very interesting address in the Dunbar Memorial School-room recently on " How Italy Became a Nation."

Rev. J. Glynne Davies presided, and, in a short introductory statement, thanked the audience for coming in such large numbers to hear the lecture, and for coming to support the cause of the Young People's Guild, for which a collection would be taken up. The Guild had served a very useful purpose since its inauguration. It had been a means of keeping them in touch with their men on active service. The past two Xmas parcels and Xmas greetings had been sent to the men, and this had depleted their funds. More money was now needed, as parcels would be sent again next Xmas if the war was not over, but if victory was gained ere then they could spend it on giving them a rousing welcome home, which would be a far happier way. He had pleasure in introducing to them Rev. Mr. Pickering.

Mr. Pickering, who was received with applause, said an address upon how Italy became a nation was a very difficult one, as there were many conflicting circumstances in the development of the Italian nation. Italy was the Balkan problem of the middle of the 19th century. It was a nation confronted with two movements—one for unity and the other for independence. She was the storm centre of European hopes, and, as a nation, was practically a new creation. She had only been united as part of the Roman Empire, and in the 11th century was but a mere geographical expression. Italy was split into small states, and was in a position of dependency on the larger European powers. After the Napoleonic wars she was practically under the sway of Austria, and her rulers had no voice in the government of the country. The Papal States were actually under the Pope, who was a temporal monarch, as well as being a spiritual head. The only independent parts were a small portion of the country near the Alps, and the State of Piedmont and the Island of Sardinia, which formed the Kingdom of Sardinia, and that remained the only free part of Italy right up to 1860. The great powers of Europe were determined that she should remain in that state, and the Pope, supported by the Catholic world, was determined to retain his temporal power. An independent Italy seemed a feeble dream—a united Italy a remote vision. Misgovernment was the first thing which started Italy on her way to becoming a nation ; she was anxious to escape the domination of Austria and to escape from the temporal power of the Pope. Though the Italians had the same language and a common religion, there was more difference between them than the North and South of Ireland. The country was split into separate states, and never thought of uniting. If anything brought about the unity of Italy it was the rebellion organised by Mazzini in 1849. He followed the teaching of Dante, who five hundred years before saw the weakness of Italy in being divided into separate states. Mazzini's only fault was that he supported Republican ideas, but he was

a true patriot, and later, when he saw that he could help his country by doing so, he allied himself with King Charles Albert, King of Piedmont, and so allowed King Victor Emmanuel in after years to come into his rights as ruler of a united Italy. Mr. Pickering then proceeded to give a full account of the various rebellions in Italy: how the smaller states gradually linked up with Piedmont, and the great part Garibaldi and his "red shirts" played in the making of Italy. He referred at length also to the wily diplomacy of Count Cavour, who, while openly opposed to Garibaldi, was secretly helping him. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 was the means of finally cementing together the various states, and brought about the fine nation of Italy as she stood at present.

A vote of thanks to the lecturer, moved by Mr. S. Bell, and seconded by Mr. M'Keown, was passed by acclamation, and the proceedings terminated with the singing of the National Anthem.

B. E. F. IN EAST AFRICA.

(*Continued.*)

The country we traversed was alive with wild animals, especially lions. It was an ordinary thing to see a leopard pass or stop to sniff round one of our motors and stare long with malice aforethought at the lonely driver, but it had no love for the noise of the engine.

When General Smuts came to see how we were getting along he was stopped on his way many a time by lions in unlimited companies, and the result of his experience was the issue of a new order that motors were not to run singly through such a country, but in sufficient numbers together, so that should any of them hopelessly break down their drivers could board one of the others and be saved unnecessary risks.

In this jungle we frequently heard reports of losses among horses, and, however, we had to rough it for six weeks, during which we had one religious service.

In the meantime the effects of fever were visible among the men, many of whom were conveyed by us on our return journeys to camps; they were in a pitiable state—some unable to stand on their feet; others almost as bad—drinking anything and everything they could find in the form of liquid.

Though the climate was scorching hot, many of them were wrapped in their great coats, with three or four blankets in addition. In some cases the poor fellows were delirious and raving; some prayed to be left alone, whilst others, with an unnatural fever-wrought craving, cried for bully beef and biscuits—all in a sorry plight and a hundred miles away from the nearest hospital.

All kinds of materials and supplies necessary for the front were conveyed by us on our outward journeys, and on our return journeys we carried men back to camps and the fever-stricken to hospitals. We did everything we could to ease and comfort the sufferers, some of whom were so seriously ill that they died on the way.

On one occasion, whilst taking some slightly wounded men back to camp, and on coming to an open space in a thick jungle, we were surrounded by hundreds of monkeys of all sizes; the trees and undergrowth were alive with them. We stopped, and some of them approached our motors, some of the sportsmen on board grasping their opportunity, as well as their rifles, fired at them, killing two and wounding one old fellow. When the rest of the monkeys saw that one of their "elders" was wounded two rushed out of the thicket, lifted him ambulance fashion, and conveyed him to safety. It was remarkable the way and the courage with which that was done. During my stay in Moshi I tried to learn something of the native language and customs. I had not advanced very far, when a Swahili gave me to understand that they, as a people, were better and braver any day of the week than the Kevirondos. A few days later the Kevirondos told me that, without a shadow of doubt, they were in every

way superior to the Swahilis. Rather amusing, and how very much like the Kaiser's complaint. However, the Swahilis are good-natured and obedient, and, as I observed in their transactions, they are strictly honest; they will do anything for a European garment or bit of clothing, and they have great respect for the white man.

Our boy is a Swahili. One day I sent him to the nearest farm for some eggs; he started on his errand at 8 a.m., with money to buy fifty; that day passed, and no signs of him. The second day passed, and nothing of him; but at dusk on the third day he arrived with his burden; and, on questioning him, I found that he had tried many a place for eggs, and had to walk 70 miles before he got what he wanted for the white man, and while going on his way he had woven a basket to put the eggs in, lest any should be broken. In money matters, in sums and coins they are very simple; they like rupees, but they cannot understand that one piece can be equal in value to a number of smaller pieces: that a sovereign, for instance, is equal in value to twenty shillings. They prefer British or India or South African coins to any other, and they hate the sight of a picture, stamp, or image of the Kaiser with a healthy hatred. In their primitive simplicity they lead happy lives, notwithstanding the fact, which is a rule among them, that they marry two wives, whom they buy at the rate of one wife worth 30 sheep: the second wife about the same price as the first. When the bargain is settled, the bridegroom, doubly married, as lord and master, ceases to work; the wives henceforth must see to all kinds of work, which they do cheerfully, providing for his lordship and performing all the necessary common round of duties. It is the wives who build the rude hut, clear and till the land, and manage the stock.

(*To be continued.*)

Cherish the memory of little kindnesses. Take no notice of slights; they are mostly imaginary.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

To be used in accordance with the Scheme of Instruction prepared by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I. for 1918.

3rd March. Philip the First Missionary. Read Acts viii. 1-13. Key Text, Acts viii. 8.

1. *Persecution.* Stephen's death let loose the forces of bigotry, which for a while had been kept in check by the wise Jewish lawyer, Gamaliel. Christians, great and small, suffered from the fury; their houses were entered, and they were thrown into prison. Chief amongst the persecutors was Saul. But, as is always the case, persecution defeated itself; for, being driven out of Jerusalem, the Christians fled far and wide, *carrying their message with them.* It was like the scattering of good seed, which, if sown too thickly, bears little fruit, but spread over a large area brings forth a great harvest. Each Christian was a seed, and thus the harvest of believers grew.

2. *Philip.* Like Stephen, he was a deacon. Had he been left alone in comfort he might have done nothing more than provide for a few poor widows. But, being driven from Jerusalem, he became a *missionary in Samaria.* [*For elder scholars.* Samaria would prove a friendly spot because of a long standing theological feud between the Jews of Samaria and the Jews of Jerusalem.] Philip revealed the Holy Spirit by his teaching and power to overcome unclean spirits. As we have said in a previous lesson, all cases of mysterious sickness were put down to unclean spirits, and it is in these cases that the Holy Spirit is most powerful. It is *faith healing.*

3. *Simon the Sorcerer.* His conversion was not genuine, because not in the right spirit. He thought the new Gospel would give him new opportunities to make gain for himself. But we must make goodness—not gain—our aim. We must help others—not seek profit for ourselves. We should not, for instance, come to Sunday School simply to get prizes, but, above all, to learn

how to be better and make the world better. [*For elder scholars.* The modern Simons are those who attend a church merely to get a good reputation, and to get as much business as possible from their profession of faith. This is the sin of Simony.]

4. The *Holy Spirit cannot be purchased.* Simon measured "all things by money," even the Holy Spirit. He is like those who, making money in the old wicked way, imagine they have obtained a secure place in heaven by giving part (usually a very small part) of their ill-gotten gains away to the church and to charity. But did not the Holy Spirit come to the poor widow who only gave a farthing? She gave all she could, *with a pure heart.* Compare the story of King Midas, who thought he could purchase happiness by means of the golden Touch. He found that gold only brought misery. Contrast the poem: "The shirt of a happy man," where we find a perfectly happy beggar who had not even a shirt to his back. Simon eventually found salvation by being humbled into a sincere repentance.

10th March. The First African Convert. Read Acts viii. 26-38. Key Text, Luke ii. 32.

1. *The Ethiopian eunuch.* Philip proved himself a most fruitful seed, for not only did his wanderings take him amongst the Samaritans, but brought him into touch with Ethiopia. Ethiopia was the name of a vast country south of Egypt; nothing further south than Ethiopia was then known in Africa. Candace (the name given to all the Ethiopian queens, as Pharaoh was to all the Egyptian kings) was a powerful queen, and state business no doubt took her important official as far as Jerusalem.

2. The *meeting between Philip and the Ethiopian.* Rarely has anything more picturesque been described. Philip was moved by the Spirit to go down to the sea-coast, near Gaza; the Ethiopian had to pass by there on his way home; owing, no doubt, to his visit to Jerusalem, the Ethiopian was reading over the Jewish scriptures; at the very moment of Philip's addressing him he was reading the beautiful words of Isaiah liii. 7, 8, and was wondering what they meant.

3. *The Conversion.* Philip's explanation that the words of Isaiah had been fulfilled in Jesus only a few years before convinced the eunuch, who proved himself a zealous convert by suggesting that the chariot should be stopped and himself immediately baptized. He believed in the motto: "Do it now," which is not merely a rule for business success, but also for salvation. He was not like King Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 25), who said to Paul that he was "almost persuaded," meaning that he agreed with Paul, but would not venture on the decisive step, because, no doubt, it would have meant great sacrifices. There are many of us to-day who wish to be really Christians, but we keep on putting it off, because we fear the change. But no good wishes or good resolutions are worth anything until they take shape in an act. If we want to be good, then we must seize the first opportunity of "clinching it" by doing something good. There are lots of folk who almost weep over the sufferings of the poor, but never think of sacrificing a meal or even a little time to relieve one poor person close at hand; lots who will talk about goodness, but never think of doing a little good act at home. All talk of goodness and all good intentions are merely shapeless wax, which will harden into a useless characterless man, unless the seal is fixed whilst it is hot. The seal is the act that proves our genuineness.

17th March. Saul, the persecutor, converted. Read Acts ix. 1-19. Key Text, Acts ix. 15.

Introduction. The conversion of Saul is one of the most remarkable facts in history. We are inclined to welcome it because Saul was converted to something *we think is* right and true. But if he had been converted to something we thought was false and wrong, our inclination would be to insult him by calling him a *turncoat.* What we have to remember is that there must be something fine about any man who is willing to change his opinions from

sincere conviction, especially when by so doing he makes as great a sacrifice as Saul did. This great persecutor at once lost his high position among the Jews, and for a long time was distrusted by the Christians. God marked him to be a chosen vessel and the apostle to the Gentiles, because he was sincere and zealous. He was active and self-sacrificing for the wrong side because he believed it was right; so soon as he saw his mistake, he bravely gave his life to work for the right. The words spoken in the vision show that Saul was opposed to Jesus because he felt that he was a false Messiah; but he learnt that Jesus was the true Messiah, and henceforth became his follower. [*For elder scholars.* Verse 7 is contradicted by Acts xxii. 9, whence we may reasonably assume that Saul *alone* experienced the vision.] The vision was a real revelation of God. In a similar way, Joan of Arc learnt in visions that she, a humble shepherdess, was to become the saviour of France.

1. *The Persecutor converted.* Saul's zeal for Judaism is shown by the fact that he *voluntarily* undertook this mission to Damascus (see verse 2). He persecuted because his religion inspired him to persecute. But he never attempted, in turn, to persecute his old religion after he became a Christian, for the simple reason that our Lord forbids persecution, and bids us rather submit to persecution ourselves. No Christians persecute their opponents. Those who do persecute in the name of Christ are blaspheming him.

2. *Ananias.* Do not confuse this noble Christian with the other Ananias, who told lies to the apostles. To him was given the gracious opportunity of revealing to blind, sick, bewildered Saul the practical meaning of Christianity. Naturally, he was reluctant to go to this bitter persecutor, for it looked like putting his head in the lion's mouth. But, when he realized that by going to Saul he would be doing the Lord's work, he bravely went, and completed Saul's conversion by addressing him with the single, beautiful word: "Brother." In that word is the whole essence of Christian discipleship expressed. How Saul's heart would be torn to tenderness to find one of his old enemies, whose very life he had sworn to take, calling him "Brother"! If we would convince those about us that we are Christians, then we must treat them as our dear sisters and brothers. *e.g.*, story of Father Damien and the lepers.

23rd March. Saul proves himself. Read Acts ix. 19-30. Key Text, Acts ix. 20.

1. *Saul's boldness.* Saul might have gone quietly away to some parts where he was little known before announcing his conversion. Instead, he chose the harder part. He had come to Damascus to persecute the Christians; now he stood up in the public places of Damascus, in the very synagogues of the Jews, and preached Christ. Think of the terrible misunderstandings he would have to face, both from Jews and Christians. God approved of him, because God knows the heart; but it is much harder to approve oneself to ignorant man. Take the pathetic poem about the brave dog Gelert, whose master misunderstood and thought the dog had killed his child, when really he had saved the child's life. The true Christian must be prepared for misunderstanding.

2. *The rage of the Jews.* Throughout his career Saul was constantly in danger of his life from his old companions, the Jews. Their rage can be easily understood, for they would regard him as a traitor. But treachery is mean and cunning, whereas Saul was always bravely risking his life. No doubt many boys and girls who have got amongst foolish and bad companions would be much more ready to make a change if they were not afraid of the jeers and insults of their old companions. [*For elder scholars.* It is significant that Saul, who was to be the apostle of the Gentiles, should have had to experience this bitter loneliness and contempt from his old friends, for the Gentiles were regarded also with contempt as outsiders. So that the despised and rejected Paul

went to bring joy to the despised and rejected Gentiles.]

3. *Barnabas.* After escaping the plots of the Jews at Damascus, Saul found the Christians at Jerusalem very suspicious about receiving him. But he found a true friend in Barnabas. In Gould's "Stories for Moral Instruction," p. 81, there is a beautiful story about friendship. A man came under the suspicion of the Emperor of Rome, and was summoned to appear before him. He had three friends, and, in his terror, asked each in turn for his help. One says, "I do not see what I can do." The second, "I should only risk my own life by coming with you, but I will come as far as the palace." The third, "I will come with you and tell the Emperor all the good I know of you, and will show that at least one man trusts you." This last was the true friend: in the same way Barnabas was a true friend to Saul. He was Saul's constant friend. His name means "Son of Consolation," and time after time he brought comfort to Saul.

4. *Saul is sent to Tarsus.* His friends realize that he should go into retirement at home for a while until the resentment and suspicion against him are blown over. This is a time of preparation for Saul, as it was with Martin Luther, when his friends imprisoned him for a while after his great challenge to his enemies at Worms.

31*st March. Easter Lesson.* Read Acts xiii. 26-41. Key Text, Psalm xvi. 10.

Introduction. For three very good reasons the Christians were convinced that Jesus was not dead, but eternally alive. These three reasons are given more or less clearly in this sermon by St. Paul, which forms our lesson.

1. *The Re-appearances.* Various of the disciples had seen Jesus since his crucifixion. This need not mean, of course, that they had seen him in the flesh, although many folk think this is so. Jesus himself had taught that God is a spirit, and therefore it is reasonable to believe that when Jesus went to God he went in the spirit, and not in the body. The Jews had destroyed the body, but so doing they set free our Lord's eternal spirit, and it was this spirit which appeared in gracious visions to the bereaved disciples. [*For elder scholars.* The oldest and best evidence about the re-appearances is that of St. Paul himself. In I. Corinthians xv. 3-8 St. Paul puts all the re-appearances of Jesus, *including that to himself,* on the same level, and we know that what he saw was the Spiritual Christ.]

2. *Fulfilment of God's promises.* "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm xvi. 10). In man's heart there is the divine hope of eternal life. Without hope life would have little meaning. We do good in the hope of seeing the smile on God's face. Whether we know it or not, we cannot rest content until we have become perfect children of God. Therefore we want to go on living until we are as good as can be, and God has promised that we shall go on living beyond this little life. But this was only felt with anything like certainty after Jesus had been crucified. Those who knew him were convinced that such perfection as his belonged to heaven, and could not be destroyed by earth.

3. *The living Christ in men's hearts.* After Jesus had died his followers found that they were actually able to do much nobler and better things than before. Then they realized that this must be because Jesus now lived in the heart of every Christian and helped him to be good. This is the surest proof of the three. It is just wonderful what even the humblest can do in the name of Christ. A Christian can make the little world about him a real heaven, because Christ lives in him and gives him power to do heavenly deeds. If the whole body of Christian worshippers really tried to be Christians, they would prove to the whole world that Christ was eternally alive, because they would make everything so much better and happier.

4. *Easter.* We celebrate Jesus' conquest over death at a most appropriate season—the springtime of the year. If teachers wish to give the children a fair impression of the meaning of the

Resurrection they should employ, say, the Easter lily as an example. The dry dead-looking bulb: it is put into the earth, and a new and beautiful life springs forth. Point to the winter world as *apparent* death; the breath of spring comes, and all is life again. So with us: the breath of Christ causes the blossoming of a new and eternal life which death cannot destroy.

E. H. P.

Reports.

Unity Guild. — On December 12th, 1917, members and friends assembled in goodly numbers in Rosemary Hall, to journey, under the guidance of Rev. W. H. Townley-Tilson, to distant Connemara. It was a pleasant pictorial trip, through romantic glens and rugged mountain scenery, and it is delightful to recall that in such interesting company lovely moors, and even desolate bog-lands, became possessed of a haunting charm.

The Annual Soiree, which was held in the Central Hall, on Friday, January 4th, saw a numerous company seated at the tables taking a hand at "whist." It augured well for the balance that will be handed over to a deserving "War Charity."

If the attendance on January 16th at Mountpottinger Schoolroom was sparse, when Mr. W. J. Baxter, of Dromore, delivered his fine address on "A Great Novel"—Meredith's "The Egoist," the fact reflects rather upon the literary tastes of Guild members than upon the lecturer's ability and subject. Those present felt deeply indebted to Mr. Baxter, as was shown in the hearty way the vote of thanks was carried. The lecturer, in an admirable survey of the sociological and literary influences of the early and middle years of the 19th Century, sought and established the place of Meredith in the world of letters and life. Whilst a fuller treatment of the novel itself would have been welcome, all were grateful for Mr. Baxter's fine appreciation of Meredith's conception of the twofold nature of man, of society's influence, and again, his influence upon society. Meredithian readers will return to their treasures with renewed interest, and in particular to "The Egoist."

There was a good attendance at Ladies' Night, when Mrs. Jackson and Miss Sayers each read a paper dealing with lands across the sea. Both were personal memories, one of a short and, one would gather, a rather strenuous trip to Rome, the other a more mature and considered impression left by a more protracted stay in New Zealand. It was as natural for Miss Sayers to give the details of her visit to the Eternal City as for Mrs. Jackson to paint in the broader effects carried away from a long sojourn in the land of which she spoke. This variety of treatment rendered the evening all the more enjoyable, both papers being excellent in themselves and well delivered. The great pity was that Mrs. Rossington's continued illness prevented her, too, being on the platform, as had been arranged when the Winter Syllabus was drawn up.

The rehearsals for the Dramatic Entertainment are now in full swing, and promise well for the performance on 13th March. The plays selected are much better than those presented last year, and it is hoped that the work of the actors will be repayed by enabling their efforts to raise a good round sum for the Limbless Hospital.

* *

Antrim.—Rev. Alfred Turner came over to Antrim on Sunday, February 10th, when a special service was held at 3-30 to hear him give an account of his work among the soldiers in France. Unfortunately the day turned out very wet, but, nevertheless, a fairly good congregation assembled. The speaker gave us a most interesting description of Y.M.C.A. work in France, giving vivid illustrations from his own observation and experience, and pointed out the necessity of those at home doing "their bit" before a victorious peace is ours. The hymns were most suitable —"O God, our help," "Lord, while for all mankind we pray," and Oxen-

ham's prayer "For the Men at the Front." The collection, amounting to £1 11s. 4½d., was for the Red Cross. After the benediction, the National Anthem was sung, bringing a very impressive service to a close.

* *

Ballymoney.—Cadet George Pinkerton (son of Mr. R. D. Pinkerton, J.P., Ballaghmore) has been promoted to the rank of Second-Lieutenant. He joined the Royal Engineers shortly after the outbreak of war, and was on active service in France for two years, being promoted Corporal. He recently received a cadetship, and has now gained his commission in the Royal Garrison Artillery. His other brother, Petty Officer John Pinkerton, took part with the R.N.A.S. detachment, under Commander Locker Sampson, M.P., in the operations on the Russian, Roumanian, and Galician fronts.

* *

Cairncastle.—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held on Thursday evening, January 24th, in the School-room. After tea, the minister took the chair, and the Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were read, the former showing a balance in hand. A report was also given of the Sunday School, showing another increase in the average attendance; two scholars had not missed a day, and ten had over forty attendances, which was very good, considering the long distances some had to come and the very wet weather during most of the year. The minister spoke of the larger attendance at the November Communion Service, and said how he felt it would be to the interest of the Congregation to keep the Sunday before Communion as a preparation service, when all communicants could be present, instead of having a service on the Friday, when so few were able to attend; however, it seemed the wish of those present that the Friday service should continue, and the minister respected this wish. He also referred to the handsome lamp which illuminated the school-room, and which was the gift—since the last Annual Meeting—of Mrs. M'Auley, of Croft House, a daughter of one of the former ministers of the Old Meeting House, the Rev. Robert Hall. During the evening songs were sung by the following ladies and gentlemen:—Miss Mary Buchanan, Mrs. Thompson, Mr John M'Neill, and Mr. James Maxwell. Dancing, games, puzzles, and stereoscopic views provided good entertainment for a very pleasant evening, and the meeting broke up at 12-30 a.m., after the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

On the following evening, January 25th, at 4 o'clock, the minister and his wife gave a party to the children of the Congregation. It was good to see the school-room so full of merry, happy children, who played games of all sorts till about 8-30, when the party broke up.

Since the latter end of October the minister has been giving Penny Readings every Monday evening in the School-room; and at the beginning of the year a Recreation Club was opened for boys of sixteen and upwards; ping-pong, draughts, and other games are provided; at the present time there is a membership of nineteen.

* *

Comber.—The Annual Sunday School Treat was held here on Wednesday, 20th February. In spite of the inclement weather, there was a large attendance of parents and friends. The treat took the form of a dramatic entertainment. Three plays were presented. The "Fairy Gifts," by the junior scholars; "Protection," by the senior girls; and "A Couple of Scamps," by the senior boys. In addition, recitations were given by other scholars. Prizes were distributed by Mrs. J. M. Andrews to thirty-four scholars for good attendance and good answering in class. Reference was made to the fact that 16 scholars had not missed a Sunday during the year. Very hearty votes of thanks were passed to the tea-makers and those who had kindly provided the very scarce commodity known as sugar; to Mrs. Andrews, and to Miss Andrews, Miss Todd, and Miss Herron, who had trained the scholars. The performance is to be repeated at a later date for the benefit of the outside public.

Crumlin.—This year the Congregation at Crumlin decided to pay their minister a war bonus, and recently Rev. S. E. Bowen received £12 10s. in payment of same.

* *

Downpatrick.—On Wednesday, Jan. 30th, the scholars of the Downpatrick and of our Summer School at Hollymount met in the Manse School-room for the Annual Party. There were 55 children at the tea, and later in the evening several adults were present, and our room was found to be much too small for the gathering. There was a happy round of the old games, and a charade by the elder scholars caused much amusement. A book was presented to each child whose name is on the School Registers; this is 40 for Downpatrick and 15 for Hollymount. These books were distributed by Mrs. Philipson. Two of our youngest scholars—Mary and Marshall Stewart—gave musical contributions, which were very much enjoyed. The arrangements had been carried out by the Misses Jordan, who give invaluable help in all our school work. Several magic lantern exhibitions have been given by the minister, Rev. Ralph Philipson, assisted by Mr. Robert Chambers, and those in the country districts have been particularly successful. Mr. Philipson's motive has been to do something towards providing healthy recreation for those who have not the advantages of the town.

* *

Killinchy. — The Annual Sunday School Concert was held on Tuesday, January 1st, 1918. This annual fixture was a great success. We are proud of the achievement, because the items were largely provided by the Sunday School teachers and scholars. The children did their part remarkably well, giving a spirited rendering of the late H. W. Hawke's little plays "King Amour" and "Beauty and the Beast." The aptitude of the children in learning their parts and profiting by the teaching is very gratifying to their elders. The young people gave a sketch that was greatly enjoyed, entitled: "Larks for an hour." An instructive dialogue by Misses Sarah and Maggie M'Cormick was given in first-rate style, while Misses Minnie and Martha M'Cormick also gave a dialogue, into the spirit of which they fully entered, and carried the audience with them. Miss Maggie Frame's violin solos were a feature that stood in a class by themselves. Recitations were given in fine style by Misses Mary M'Briar and Sarah Morrow, and also by Mr. David Orr; songs by Messrs. M'Cullough and R. S. Orr, the Misses Kelly and Russell, all of which were well received and obtained well-merited encores. The varied programme was given before a crowded house. The audience indicated their appreciation by giving a splendid hearing throughout. The proceeds, which were for the school funds, amounted to £13.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was fixed for Thursday, January 31st. The members—having been called by two Sundays' notice from the pulpit, and also by circular—attended in good numbers, the Lecture Hall being fairly well filled. Tea was partaken of at 7 p.m., when justice was done to a—considering the times—splendid repast. The annual business was then proceeded with, the Rev. D. J. Williams in the chair. The Secretary read the Annual Statement of Accounts, which indicated a substantial balance in the Bank on the year's working. This balance and more will be needed, as it is the intention of the Committee to renovate the whole church front. This will entail considerable expenditure, and means will have to be devised to meet the outlay. The Committee, with the addition of the name of Mr. Wm. M'Bride, a tried and true member of the Officers' and Graveyard Committee, were re-elected. Distribution of Reward Books for attendances at the Sunday School was then made, Miss Potter, an old Sunday School teacher, handing the books to the children.

* *

Mountpottinger.—On Friday, Jan. 25th, the Schoolroom was well filled upon the occasion of a Concert and Dramatic Entertainment organised by Mrs. John Allen and Mrs. E. R. Jack-

son in aid of the Sunday School Funds. The artistes were—Miss M. Douglas, Mr. Quentin D. Nichol, who was in splendid voice, and received a well-merited encore; Mr. Leonard Bury, the blind organist, who gave his own compositions; Mrs. L. W. M. Hay and the Rev. Matthew Watkins, the two latter being also heard to advantage in a duet. The dramatic element was provided by a monologue by Mrs. E. R. Jackson, and an amusing sketch, in which the following took part, the character parts being well sustained:—Misses M. Neill, D. and F. Newman, C. M'Dowell, Mrs. E. R. Jackson, and Messrs. T. M'Clure, W. A. Davidson, and T. Heasty. Tea and a dance rounded off the evening's enjoyment, and, as a result, £3 18s. 6d. has been handed over to the Sunday School Treasurer.

The Annul Sunday School Party and Prize Distribution took place on Friday, February 8th, when there was a good attendance of scholars and their friends. Tea having been served, an excellent entertainment was provided by the scholars. Songs were contributed by Betty and Dorothy Newman and Miss M. Neill; Edith Malcom rendered a monologue, appearing also in a duologue with Florrie Newman. A very amusing sketch, entitled: "Slightly Mixed," in which the characters were sustained by Misses M. Neill, D. Newman, M. Young, K. Mitchell, and N. Martin, concluded the entertainment. Following this, Mrs. H. L. Orr distributed the prizes for attendance during the past year. The special prizes promised by Mrs. Orr a twelve-month ago were handed to Edith Malcom and Norah Martin, who had both the fine record of 98 per cent. of attendances. The distribution of gifts from a giant cracker by a patriarchal Father Christmas brought an enjoyable evening to a close.

* *

Newry.—The members of the Young People's Guild in connection with the Newry Unitarian Church entertained the convalescent soldiers at present in the Military Barrack and Newry General Hospital to tea and cake on the evening of the 15th instant. There was a large attendance of the members of the Guild and other guests, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. Mrs. Slipper, wife of the respected minister of the Church, and Mrs. Crothers, assisted by Mrs. Jack Rowland, Mrs. R. J. M'Comb, the Misses S. and M. Warnock, Miss M'Comb, and Miss Eliza Mitchel, presided over the tea tables, assisted by Messrs. A. Megaw and R. J. M'Comb, who acted as stewards. After tea, Rev. G. J. Slipper took the chair, and heartily welcomed their soldier guests. He said they all felt that they could not do enough for the men who had risked their lives to stem the onrush of the hordes of Germany and prevented them from invading our shores. He was proud to meet the men who had been wounded in the cause, and were now recovering from their injuries under the care of their medical officers, and he hoped they would soon be restored to good health again. Each soldier was then handed a box of cigarettes, and they were informed by the Chairman that they could all light up and enjoy a good smoke. A programme of songs and recitations was afterwards gone through, the following taking part:—Mrs. Jack Rowland, Miss M'Clelland, Sergt. North, Private Collins, Private Jeffreys, Private Short, and Mr. Jack Heather, who contributed two comic songs. Miss Lamb presided at the piano. A short sketch, entitled: "The Vicar's Daughter," was also gone through, and caused considerable merriment. Games were afterwards indulged in, and shortly after ten o'clock the Chairman said they would have to break up, as their guests' time was up. On behalf of the Guild, he would say that before the soldiers left town they hoped to have the pleasure of seeing them amongst them again. Sergeant North, on behalf of himself and the soldiers, thanked the Rev. Chairman and the members of the Guild for their thoughtfulness and kindness in inviting them there that evening and providing them with such an enjoyable entertainment. The National Anthem was then heartily sung, and the party separated.

Raloo.—Raloo Sunday School Examination was held on Saturday, 9th February. There were eleven scholars turned up at the Examination, and others were prevented from attending by the great storm of wind and rain. But the scholars who came were on the tip-toe of expectation to try for a first prize certificate. Mrs. E. Thompson, Cairncastle, persevered to keep her appointment, and examined them with great care and skill, drawing out some wonderful answers. She also brought some very interesting views of Palestine, Jerusalem, and Nazareth, and the Lake of Galilee, which helped the children to understand, and gave a thorough grasp of the situation. She also spoke a few encouraging words regarding the work of our Sunday School, and the boys and girls went home well pleased with what they did.

MARRIAGE.

CURRY—GAW.—At Ballyhemlin Meeting-House Co. Down, on February 21st, 1918, Samuel Curry, H.M.S. "Sapphire," to Mary Agnes Gaw, both of Ballyhalbert.

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